



Clark County Health Department Fact Sheet

Emergency Drinking Water Supplies After a Flood

Drinking water contaminated by floodwater may carry microorganisms capable of producing illness. Do not use a water supply that has been affected by the flood until public health authorities have determined it is safe. It may take time to determine if the water is safe. Cleaning or purifying water supplies will be difficult or impossible to accomplish until floodwaters have receded.

Drinking Water

- If you have public water, ask your local water district or company whether your water is safe to drink. If in doubt, boil all drinking water for 3-5 minutes before use.
- Boil water from private water systems that have been flooded for 3-5 minutes before use.
- Treat water used for brushing teeth, washing dishes or used to cook or prepare food in the same manner.

Cleaning a private well

Pump the well until water runs clear, then disinfect in this way:

- Roughly calculate the number of gallons in the well (a six-inch diameter well casing has 1.5 gallons per foot of water).
- Put liquid household bleach (5.25% chlorine) into the well (three cups per 100 gallons of water).
- If possible, mix bleach in the well by placing a hose into the top of the well casing and recirculate the treated water by connecting the hose to a faucet on the discharge side of the pressure tank.
- Start the pump. Spray the water back into the well and wash the sides of the casing for at least 15 minutes.
- Open every faucet in the system and let the water run until the smell of chlorine can be detected. Then close all faucets and let stand for several hours, preferably overnight.
- After this time period, operate the pump by turning on all faucets, continuing until the odor of chlorine has disappeared.

For more information, call the Health Department at (360) 397-8428.